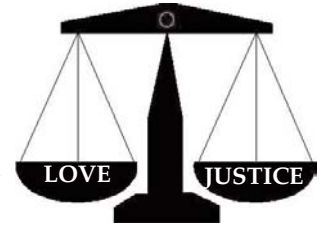


Yeshua MISHPACHAH

UPHOLDING HUMAN
DIGNITY



Matt. 25:31-46

A NEWSLETTER TO THE FAMILY OF JESUS FROM RESTORATION MINISTRIES

The Hebraic family is not simply an individual or private matter. Rather, it is an institution in which the whole community has a stake. Thus, the Hebrew word "mishpachah," meaning family, not only refers to parents and children, but to the whole extended family worldwide in the body of "Yeshua"—our Jesus.

Burn Your Bridges Behind You

Dear Friends,

The day after Sue and I uploaded our latest article, *I Hate Nicolaitanism!* (on our website under "Hebraic Articles"), the following question to Focus on the Family appeared in our local paper:

My 14-year-old boy is flighty, mischievous, irresponsible and lazy. If I don't watch him very carefully, he'll find ways to get into trouble — not really bad stuff, just stupid kid behavior. But I'm afraid I could lose him right at this time. What can I do to keep him on track?

Before you read the answer that was given to this parent, let me propose a few things for you to consider:

- Is there enough information to give this person a wise answer?
- If not, what would you ask him/her before giving a reply?
- If you feel you could give a wise reply, what would you say?

If you've taken the time to read our article *I Hate Nicolaitanism!*, you probably understand why the response that was given was so disturbing — a Nicolaitan response! In this case the answer was another "Outsource the kid to the religious establishment. Your family can't handle this, so you'd better give him to a church program to raise."

Dr. James Dobson responded, It is most important to keep your rambunctious youngster mov-

ing. If you let him get bored, he'll find destructive ways to use unstructured and unsupervised time. *My advice is to get him involved in the very best church youth program you can find.* If your local congregation has only four bored kids in its junior high department and seven sleepy high schoolers, I would consider *changing churches.* I know doing that could be disruptive to the rest of the family, but it might help save your volatile kid...(emphasis added)

Consider the information below in light of Dr. Dobson's reply. One of the statistics is from his ministry.

Church youth work in the US has been found to be less than 3% effective in training up young people who walk wholeheartedly for Jesus. The average stay of a youth pastor in a congregation today is about 9 months. A recent study found that fewer than 23% of children raised in Christian homes follow in the faith of their parents.

What would a *Hebraic* reply be to that parent's question?

Why don't you and your family begin to pray and fast, not only for your son, but that God would raise up another family or two so that your son could have some meaningful friends within the context of inter-family fellowship. Don't give up praying and fasting until your

heavenly Father sends His answer!

I Hate Nicolaitanism!

It's important for you to know that *Nicolaitanism* is a religious system of *control and power*, an ecclesiastical system of suppression and subjugation. This insidious two-tiered system is recognized by the very definition of the name. The Greek word *nicolaitane* [NIK-oh-lay-it-TAH-nay] means "conquering the people." The first part of the word refers to *nikos*, to conquer or have victory over. The middle of the word is derived from *laos*, which means "the people". The commonly used term "laity" comes from it.

Which of the aforementioned replies, Nicolaitan or Hebraic, will give our Father the greatest glory? Keep in mind that biblically-based solutions to a situation don't just alleviate the problem, but bring glory to God!

Nicolaitanism has incorporated so many systematic solutions to the needs of people, but how few bring any glory to our Father. For instance, if you're divorced, your congregation may assign you to a "divorce recovery class" and take you through weeks of psychological techniques. Problems with your teenager? Put him in a youth group. And sadly, so many Christians *like it this way* because they're removed from personal responsibility to come humbly before our Father *themselves* whenever Nicolaitanism thrives.

Preparing the Family of Jesus for the Dark Days to Come

God's Judgment on Nicolaitanism is Here

In the letters written to the seven churches in the Book of Revelation, two groups are confronted with the issue of the Nicolaitans. The letter to the church at Ephesus states, *"But you have this in your favor: You hate the practices of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate"* (Revelation 2:6). These are incredibly strong words. Can you imagine participating in something that God hates? What if you are but don't know it?

Again, to the church at Pergamum John writes, *"Likewise you also have those who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans. Repent therefore! Otherwise, I will soon come to you and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth"* (Revelation 2:15,16). At least the Ephesians hated the Nicolaitan practices as God did. Some of the Pergamum residents, though, *embraced* that teaching. What an awful situation to be in. Would *you* like to be someone against whom God Himself must fight?

We wrote *I Hate the Nicolaitans!* because of a warning from the Holy Spirit. For some time we felt hindered on several fronts of our ministry, and we prayed for guidance. One morning the Holy Spirit warned us that even though we had written about Nicolaitanism in *Pastoring by Elders*, we were still inadvertently supporting a spirit that our Father hates. He showed us that some of the email and telephone calls we received were from people who were choosing to stay within Nicolaitanism. Their problems were being brought on them *by God*, so why were *we* trying to help them?

As soon as we stopped, a whole world of wonderful things started opening for us! Then the Holy Spirit stirred us to write a fuller explanation of Nicolaitanism, which became the website article.

A Hebraic — Nicolaitan Comparison

In the two columns below is a brief comparison of the differences between the Hebraic and Nicolaitan systems. [For a fuller understanding see our article *I Hate Nicolaitanism!* on our website.]

Place a check mark next to each of the indicators that most reflect your current religious practices.

Hebraic Practices	Nicolaitan Practices
<u>Faith Practice</u>	<u>Faith Practice</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Living to glorify our Father in loving, trust-grounded obedience.	<input type="checkbox"/> Personal entertainment and satisfaction foremost motive.
<input type="checkbox"/> A 24/7 lifestyle of obedient trust which represents Jesus in the flesh to all you meet, fulfilling His purposes is your prime concern.	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious practice occurs at place where religious activity is being conducted; large numbers and public meeting place reduce accountability; sin is rarely addressed, and righteousness not considered vital to fellowship.
<input type="checkbox"/> Personal and communal righteousness is critical for fellowshiping with others; smaller number in homes increases accountability	<input type="checkbox"/> Creed is cognitive assent to biblical postulates that have little or nothing to do with your <i>way of life</i> .
<input type="checkbox"/> Doctrine is viewed as biblical principles to guide a person into a way of life pleasing to God.	<input type="checkbox"/> Leadership: Seminary-trained younger clergy. Emphasis on Bible education, not role modeling a way of life. Little personal interaction with clergy.
<input type="checkbox"/> Leadership: Older wise men shepherd God's people; personally role model life the they teach.	<input type="checkbox"/> Reliance on public building for services; heavy dependence on paid professionals for worship, counsel, activities.
<input type="checkbox"/> Reliance on personal relationships as extended spiritual family; home-based hospitality reflects Jesus to the world.	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious practice and daily life separate and compartmentalized.
<input type="checkbox"/> Salvation understood to be an ongoing pilgrimage with our Lord bringing about greater conformity to Christlikeness.	<input type="checkbox"/> Salvation viewed as a point in time, with little responsibility to change or walk in obedient trust.
<u>Family</u>	<u>Family</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Marriage covenant viewed as a physical representation of your Covenant with our Father; divorce not an option.	<input type="checkbox"/> Marriage viewed as a conditional commitment between people; frequently broken by divorce.
<input type="checkbox"/> Authority given by God to husband to love and serve his family.	<input type="checkbox"/> Authority concept and enactment not understood; often usurped by wives.
<input type="checkbox"/> Responsibility for raising successors in the faith the primary responsibility of the parents.	<input type="checkbox"/> Spiritual training outsourced to religious system.
<u>Ministry to the hurting</u>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Obedience-based, grounded in	

Turning Bitterness to Blessing

Comparison of the Hebraic and Nicolaitan Approaches

Hebraic: The Bible mandates that you forgive *without exception*; to belong to Jesus *is* to forgive. Forgiveness gets you out of *negative* territory on the chart to '0'. The emotional healing given by Jesus occurs as you enter *positive* territory through prayer for, and good deeds toward, the one who has hurt you. The further a forgiving person goes into positive territory, the less likely bitterness will return.

<u>Unforgiveness</u>	<u>Forgiveness</u>	<u>Blessing</u>
-100 -90 -80 -70 -60 -50 -40. -30 -20 -10 0 +10 +20 +30 +40 +50 +60 +70 +80 +90 +100		
enraged bitterness, hatred, begrudging, resentful	prayer for, sympathy, compassion, demonstrated love and kindness	

Nicolaitanism: Forgiveness is optional; past circumstances such as “*abuse*” and “*dysfunctional family*” are grounds for not forgiving. Few even get back to '0'; and the ones who do, ultimately end up back in negative territory — unforgiveness.

“Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord”

(2 Corinthians 6:17a).

We are encouraging each of you who are already out of the Nicolaitan system: Don't look back! Now that you are free, walk into all the grace our Father has for you. Yes, you will go through a time of isolation until you can find others who have a heart for righteousness so that you can fellowship together. But before others come, find the total sufficiency of Jesus first.

Many of you have admitted that what we have written is true, but you fear leaving Nicolaitanism. There were others who proceeded you, “*Yet at the same time many even among the leaders believed in him. But because of the Pharisees they would not confess their faith for fear they would be put out of the synagogue; for they loved praise from men more than praise from God*” (John 12:42,43).

Most who know that Nicolaitanism is hated by God stay because they can hide in their pet sins. Adulterous clergy and pedophile priests make it easy to for “*laity*” to excuse their own sins. “*The prophets prophesy lies, the priests rule by their own authority, and my people love it this way. But what will you do in the end?*” (Jer. 5:31).

God's love; if God's Word calls for it, do it. Initial step: bring them to the power of Jesus; personally responsible to repent—to turn away from sin and come to our Father through Jesus. Only Jesus can heal, no technique ever does.

___ Stipulate that they confess sins and/or forgive others, as appropriate.

___ Aim is a spiritual heart transformation by the Holy Spirit.

Work Place

___ Regarded as a mission field; God places people where He wants them to serve His Kingdom.

Outreach

___ Regard neighborhood, work-place, and school as a mission field of opportunity to reveal Jesus “with skin on”.

Charity

___ Purpose: to restore dignity to those in need: “*So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets*” (Matt. 7:12). All activity toward others guided by this foundational biblical principle.

Senior Citizens

___ Have achieved pinnacle of their lives; the wise serve as shepherds and role models; prime representatives of our Father's love for His children.

Ministry to the hurting

___ Feelings based, heavy reliance on psychological technique; dwells on past to blame someone else for personal problems; power of Jesus to heal not fully considered.

___ Bitterness entertained, and often not confronted to the point of forgiving and asking forgiveness.

___ Person's sin often overlooked in the counseling process; empathy for their hurt prevails rather than repentance in the Spirit.

___ Aim is modification of behavior and attitude, as appropriate.

Work Place

___ Seen as opportunity for economic gain and personal prestige; compartmentalized outside of religious practices.

Outreach

___ Basically unconcerned with people around them, including neighbors and family members. Leave it to the professionals.

Charity

___ Purpose: to remove problems; dignity not upheld. Financial giving represents total expression of involvement.

Senior Citizens

___ Look to escape from as many responsibilities as conscience will allow; relegated to the outskirts of spiritual responsibility.

